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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO ALL DIPLOMATIC AND CONSULAR POSTS IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS STATE 404914

E.O. 12356: N/A
TAGS: [PM](#) [US](#) [PREL](#)
SUBJECT: TF/PM02: HISTORY OF DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS TO
RESOLVE THE PANAMANIAN CRISIS

FOLLOWING BACKGROUND ON PANAMA CRISIS, WHICH HAS BEEN
MADE AVAILABLE TO PRESS IN WASHINGTON. MAY BE USED AS
DESIRED BY POSTS:

SEPTEMBER 1985 - NORIEGA FORCES BARLETTA TO RESIGN
PRESIDENCY AFTER LESS THAN ONE YEAR IN OFFICE, DESPITE
URGINGS BY HIGH-LEVEL U.S. OFFICIALS AND OTHERS TO
RESPECT CONSTITUTIONAL PROCESS AND CIVILIAN PRESIDENTIAL
AUTHORITY.

DECEMBER 1985 - ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT FOR NATIONAL
SECURITY AFFAIRS JOHN POINDEXTER TRAVELS TO PANAMA. ON
BEHALF OF THE USG, HE ADVISES NORIEGA TO OPEN POLITICAL
SPACE IN PANAMA AND REDUCE THE MILITARY'S ROLE IN
POLITICS. ADVICE GOES UNHEEDED.

JUNE 1987 - NORIEGA RENEGES ON SIGNED AGREEMENT WITH
OTHER PDF OFFICERS TO RELINQUISH COMMAND. NORIEGA FIRES
HIS DESIGNATED SUCCESSOR, DIAZ HERRERA. DIAZ PUBLICLY
ACCUSES NORIEGA OF ASSASSINATION, VOTE FRAUD
CORRUPTION. PUBLIC DEMONSTRATIONS AND STRIKES BREAK OUT
IN PROTEST AND CONTINUE INTERMITTENTLY THROUGH OCTOBER
1987.

OCTOBER 1987 - NORIEGA, FACED WITH PUBLIC PROTESTS OF
HIS RULE, ASKS PANAMANIAN CONSUL JOSE BLANDON TO CONSULT
OPPOSITION AND DEVELOP A SOLUTION. WHEN ADVISED THAT
HIS COMMITMENT TO RETIRE IS ESSENTIAL TO A SOLUTION,
NORIEGA INITIALLY SEEMS SUPPORTIVE. BUT AS NEGOTIATIONS
PROCEED, HE DISAVOWS HIS REPRESENTATIVES AND THREATENS
THEIR ARREST.

DECEMBER 1987 - ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE RICHARD
ARMITAGE TRAVELS TO PANAMA. ARMITAGE ADVISES NORIEGA
THAT U.S. RELATIONSHIP IS JEOPARDIZED BY HIS HUMAN
RIGHTS PRACTICES AND POLITICAL REPRESSION. NORIEGA
TELLS OTHER OFFICERS AND PUBLIC THAT U.S. HAS REAFFIRMED
ITS STRONG SUPPORT FOR HIS RULE.
FEBRUARY 6, 1984 - NORIEGA INDICTED FOR DRUG TRAFFICKING.

MID-FEBRUARY 1988 - PRESIDENT DELVALLE PRIVATELY ADVISES
NORIEGA TO STEP DOWN IN LIGHT OF DRUG INDICTMENTS. PRESIDENT
DELVALLE OFFERS TO USE HIS INFLUENCE TO ASSIST NORIEGA IN
HANDLING HIS LEGAL DIFFICULTIES IF NORIEGA VOLUNTARILY
RETIRES. NORIEGA REFUSES.

FEBRUARY 25 - DELVALLE DISMISSES NORIEGA; NORIEGA REBELS.

LATE FEBRUARY-EARLY MARCH - A EUROPEAN GOVERNMENT, AFTER
CONSULTATIONS WITH U.S., OFFERS NORIEGA ASYLUM AND PROTECTION
FROM EXTRADITION PURSUANT TO ITS ASYLUM LAWS. NORIEGA REFUSES
OFFER.

MARCH 16, 1988 - COUP ATTEMPT AGAINST NORIEGA.

MARCH 19, 1988 - DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY WILLIAM WALKER AND
DEPUTY LEGAL ADVISOR MICHAEL KOZAK MEET NORIEGA AND OFFER TO
FACILITATE HIS IMMEDIATE DEPARTURE TO EXILE AS WELL AS
GUARANTEES FOR THE PANAMANIAN DEFENSE FORCES. THE GOVERNMENT
POLITICAL PARTY, AND NORIEGA'S FAMILY AND FRIENDS. NORIEGA
REFUSES DISMISSES HIS OPPONENTS AS PSYCHOTIC, AND
MISREPRESENTS THE U.S. POSITION TO THE PDF GENERAL STAFF AS A
U.S. ULTIMATUM TO DISBAND THE PDF.

MARCH-APRIL 1988 - A CENTRAL AMERICAN PRESIDENT, A EUROPEAN
PRIME MINISTER AND A RESPECTED LATIN LEADER ATTEMPT TO MEDIATE
BETWEEN NORIEGA AND THE PANAMANIAN OPPOSITION, BUT NORIEGA

REJECTS OUTSIDE MEDIATION.

LATE MARCH, EARLY - CONTACTS THROUGH INTERMEDIARY WITH NORIEGA
APRIL 1988 - AND GENERAL STAFF ESTABLISH AN AGENDA FOR DIRECT
NEGOTIATIONS, INCLUDING THE SUBJECT OF NORIEGA'S DEPARTURE.

APRIL 22 - MAY 25, - PRESIDENT SENDS DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETAR
1988 - MICHAEL KOZAK AND LT. COL. GERALD CLARK AS SPECIAL
EMISSARIES. THEY NEGOTIATE DIRECTLY WITH NORIEGA A SCENARIO
FOR HIS DEPARTURE NO LATER THAN AUGUST 12, 1988, A RESTORATIO)
OF POLITICAL AND CIVIL LIBERTIES, PROVISION FOR TRANSITIONAL
POLITICAL ARRANGEMENTS TO BE NEGOTIATED BY PANAMANIAN AND
DISMISSAL OF U.S. INDICTMENTS FOLLOWING NORIEGA'S DEPARTURE.
NORIEGA REFUSES TO IMPLEMENT AGREEMENT AT LAST MOMENT, CITING
RESISTANCE FROM MIDDLE GRADE OFFICERS.

JUNE 1988 - A RESPECTED LATIN LEADER MEETS NORIEGA AND OFFERS
TO MEDIATE. NORIEGA DISMISSES SUCH EFFORTS AS IRRELEVANT.
NORIEGA STATES THAT ONLY THE U.S. HAS LEVERAGE WITH HIM.

SUMMER 1988 - A LATIN AMERICAN PRESIDENT SENDS A MILITARY
EMISSARY TO NORIEGA. THE EMISSARY FINDS NORIEGA INTRANSIGENT

SUMMER 1988 - A CENTRAL AMERICAN PRESIDENT EXPLORES THROUGH
EMISSARIES THE POSSIBILITY OF MEDIATION AMONG PANAMANIAN
POLITICAL FORCES. HE ULTIMATELY DETERMINES THAT NORIEGA IS
INTRANSIGENT AND ABANDONS THE EFFORT.

LATE SUMMER/EARLY - SECRETARY SHULTZ ENCOURAGES A SOUTH
FALL, 1988 - AMERICAN PRESIDENT IN HIS OFFER TO MEDIATE.
FOREIGN MINISTER IS APPOINTED TO UNDERTAKE THIS MISSION.
DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY KOZAK PROVIDES THE MEDIATOR A FULL
BRIEFING ON THE MAY NEGOTIATIONS AND, ON INSTRUCTIONS,
INDICATES U.S. WILLINGNESS TO ACCEPT AN APPROACH WHEREBY
NORIEGA WOULD BE ALLOWED TO TAKE EXILE IN ANOTHER COUNTRY.
THROUGH INTERMEDIARIES, U.S. ADVISES NORIEGA/GENERAL STAFF THA
MEDIATOR IS AUTHENTIC CHANNEL. MEDIATOR MEETS WITH NORIEGA
REPRESENTATIVE. NORIEGA'S FOREIGN MINISTER THEN CONTACTS
MEDIATOR ON ISSUE (PRESUMABLY AT NORIEGA'S INSTIGATION).
NORIEGA USES FACT OF CONVERSATION AS PRETEXT TO DENOUNCE
MEDIATOR AS UNRELIABLE (FOR REVEALING CONTACT TO NORIEGA'S OWN
MAN) AND CUTS OFF FURTHER CONTACT.

DECEMBER 1988 - PRESIDENT DELVALLE OFFERS TO NEGOTIATE A
PANAMANIAN SOLUTION WITH NORIEGA. NORIEGA SAYS ONLY THAT HE I
WILLING TO CEASE PRESSURE ON DELVALLE'S FAMILY AND PROPERTIES
IF DELVALLE WILL CAPITULATE.

APRIL 27, 1988 - PRESIDENT BUSH URGES FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS
ON MAY 7 TO END PANAMA'S POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC CRISIS AND
INTERNATIONAL ISOLATION.

MAY 7, 1989 - NORIEGA ANNULS ELECTIONS AFTER OPPOSITION WINS
DECISIVE VICTORY.

MAY 10, 1989 - NORIEGA'S FORCES ATTACK BRUTALLY THE OPPOSITION
CANDIDATES.

MAY 11, 1989 - PRESIDENT BUSH ANNOUNCES THAT THE UNITED STATE
STRONGLY SUPPORTS AND WILL COOPERATE WITH INITIATIVES TAKEN BY
GOVERNMENTS IN THIS HEMISPHERE TO ADDRESS THIS CRISIS THROUGH
REGIONAL DIPLOMACY AND ACTION IN THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN
STATES AND THROUGH OTHER MEANS. THE UNITED STATES AND ALL
DEMOCRATIC NATIONS IN THIS HEMISPHERE HOPE THAT A PEACEFUL
RESOLUTION CAN BE FOUND TO THE CRISIS IN PANAMA. AND WE URGE
ALL THOSE IN PANAMA, EVERY INDIVIDUAL EVERY INSTITUTION, TO
PUT THE WELL-BEING OF THEIR COUNTRY FIRST AND SEEK AN HONORABL
SOLUTION TO THIS CRISIS. THE WAY IS STILL OPEN."

MAY 17, 1989 - AN EXTRAORDINARY OAS MEETING OF CONSULTATION OF
MINISTERS OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS (MFM) ADOPTS A RESOLUTION WHICH
NOTES ABUSES BY GENERAL NORIEGA OF THE ELECTORAL PROCESS;
EXPRESSES CONCERN THAT "CRISIS . . . COULD ENDANGER THE
INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY. MFM ESTABLISHES A COMMISSIO
OF THREE FOREIGN MINISTERS TO CONCILIATE."

JUNE 6, 1989 - MFM EXTENDS THE MISSION'S MANDATE "TO MAKE IT
POSSIBLE TO ARRIVE AT A CONCILIATION FORMULA THAN CAN SURMOUNT

THE PRESENT DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL SITUATION OF PANAMA."

JULY 19, 1989 - THE OAS MISSION REPORTS THAT "THE CONTINUED PRESENCE OF GENERAL NORIEGA AS COMMANDER IN CHIEF OF THE DEFENSE FORCES HAS BEEN IDENTIFIED BOTH BY SUPPORTERS AND OPPOSITION AS ONE OF THE FACTORS, IF NOT THE FACTOR WHICH MUST BE ADDRESSED IN ORDER TO SOLVE THE CRISIS AS A WHOLE AND MORE PARTICULARLY THE LEGAL AND POLITICAL SITUATION ARISING FROM THE ANNULMENT OF THE MAY 7 ELECTORAL PROCESS."

JULY 20, 1989 - MFM DECIDES "TO REQUEST THE MISSION TO ASSIST THE PARTIES IN THE CONDUCT OF THE NEGOTIATIONS SO THAT THEY MAY BRING ABOUT, THROUGH DEMOCRATIC MECHANISMS AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH DOMESTIC PROCEDURES IN EFFECT IN PANAMA, A TRANSFER OF POWER ON SEPTEMBER 1, 1989 AND THE HOLDING OF FREE ELECTIONS SOON AS POSSIBLE."

MID-AUGUST 1989 - OAS TEAM SUCCEEDS IN BROKERING DEAL BETWEEN OPPOSITION AND NORIEGA'S REPRESENTATIVE INVOLVING A TRANSITIONAL GOVERNMENT, NORIEGA'S RESIGNATION, AND NEW ELECTIONS; NORIEGA REFUSES, DENOUNCING HIS NEGOTIATOR FOR EXCEEDING INSTRUCTIONS.

AUGUST 24, 1989 - OAS DISENGAGES FROM THE PROCESS.

LATE AUGUST 1989 - U.S. OFFICIAL MEETS SENIOR REPRESENTATIVE NORIEGA, URGES THAT ARRANGEMENTS NEGOTIATED BY PANAMANIAN UNDER OAS AUSPICES BE IMPLEMENTED, REAFFIRMS U.S. INTENTIONS REGARDING NORIEGA, AND PROVIDES ASSURANCES REGARDING AVAILABILITY OF PANAMANIAN FUNDS TO NEW GOVERNMENT"

SEPTEMBER 1, 1989 - PRESIDENT BUSH DEPLORES THE REPRESSION OF GENERAL NORIEGA AND STATES THAT THE UNITED STATES WILL NOT RECOGNIZE ANY GOVERNMENT INSTALLED BY NORIEGA.

LATE SEPTEMBER 1989 - NORIEGA'S U.S. LAWYERS CONTACT STATE DEPARTMENT SEEKING A MEETING.

OCTOBER 3, 1989 - COUP ATTEMPT AGAINST NORIEGA. COUP LEADERS OFFER NORIEGA RETIREMENT IN PANAMA. NORIEGA PUTS DOWN COUP AND EXECUTES LEADERS.

OCTOBER 1989 - DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY KOZAK, ROBERT MULLE. OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE AND DEPUTY LEGAL ADVISER MICHAEL MATHESON MEET WITH NORIEGA ATTORNEY. ATTORNEY STATES HE IS AUTHORIZED TO DISCUSS NORIEGA'S DEPARTURE. USG PARTICIPANTS REQUEST A SPECIFIC PROPOSAL AND OUTLINE USG PARAMETERS. ATTORNEY UNDERTAKES TO CONSULT WITH NORIEGA AND RETURN WITH A PROPOSAL WITHIN A WEEK. NO FURTHER CONTACT IS MADE.

NOVEMBER 1989 - NORIEGA REPRESENTATIVE ADVISES U.S. REPRESENTATIVE THAT HE HAS BEEN UNSUCCESSFUL IN OBTAINING ANY FLEXIBILITY FROM NORIEGA AND IS UNDER INSTRUCTIONS NOT TO SPEAK TO THE U.S.

BAKER